The Rights of Way and Countryside Service has volunteer groups in all parts of Wiltshire. This leaflet gives brief details of the opportunities available for volunteering in Wiltshire’s countryside.

Rights of Way

The Rights of Way Service has a long and successful record of working with town and parish councils, local community groups and volunteers who help to look after and maintain our 6000 km (4000 mile) public rights of way network. Tasks include:

- keeping paths clear of vegetation
- installing stiles, gates and bridges
- inspecting the condition of the network
- waymarking.

A number of parish and town councils have volunteer groups which undertake practical tasks using materials supplied by Wiltshire Council. There are also groups of volunteers who will travel to wherever help is needed. They find it a great opportunity to explore lesser known areas of the county and it is a social event. It is estimated that the value of work carried out annually on footpaths and bridleways by working parties comprised of members of the Ramblers is in the region of £100,000.

Recently, a volunteer scheme was undertaken on Salisbury Plain to improve the signage. Tread Lightly, a motorised vehicle user group, has been working in partnership with Wiltshire Council and the MoD. With a team of 40 volunteers, more than 300 signs have been installed and more are planned.

Volunteer help is invaluable in keeping our rights of way network open.

If you are interested in volunteering opportunities please contact rights@wiltshire.gov.uk, or telephone 01225 756178.
**Countryside**

There are countryside sites and country parks all over Wiltshire, and work undertaken by volunteers includes tree planting, managing areas for wild flowers, managing woodland, creating hibernacula for reptiles and wild mammals, pond works and erection of bird boxes. Tea breaks are included! There are also opportunities for volunteers with computer or editorial interests. Volunteer groups are established at the following locations, and all welcome newcomers:

- Bradford on Avon – Barton Farm Country Park
- Bradford on Avon – The Strips
- Devizes – Drews Pond Wood
- Southwick – Southwick Country Park
- Trowbridge – Biss Meadows
- Salisbury – Avon Valley Reserve
- Salisbury – Harnham Slope
- Urchfont – Oakfrith Wood
- Whiteparish – Highlands Way

More groups are forming so do register your interest with us even if there doesn’t appear to be a group near you yet.

We also have 65 volunteer Tree Wardens across Wiltshire involved in conserving their local trees and woods. Activities include protecting and planting trees, research, and developing projects with schools and communities. Our aim is to have a Tree Warden in each parish across Wiltshire. Could you volunteer?

For further information on countryside volunteering email countryside@wiltshire.gov.uk or telephone 01225 718647.

**Canals**

Supported by Wiltshire Council as the lead Local Authority, the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust has been given The Queen’s Award for Volunteering Service. The Trust is restoring more than 30 miles of canal in Wiltshire. Work parties are based in the Cricklade, Royal Wootton Bassett, Foxham, Chippenham, Calne, and Melksham areas. Both practical and administrative roles are needed in this project. Please contact the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust at www.wbct.org.uk or telephone 0845 226 8567.

In the north of the county around Cricklade, the Cotswold Canals Trust is restoring the Thames and Severn Canal. If you would like to volunteer contact www.cotswoldcanals.com or telephone 01453 752 568.

There are many volunteer roles on the Kennet and Avon Canal, including lock-keeping, boat trips, heritage operations and general maintenance. Some of these activities are run by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (contact www.katrust.org.uk or telephone 01380 721279). British Waterways, shortly to become the Canal and Rivers Trust, is also looking for volunteers; their details are http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/be-part-of-it/volunteering or tel 01453 752 568.

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